

MODERNISM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gallery Exhibition Schedule

Peter SARKISIAN; VideoMorphic Figures

July 10–August 31, 2019

Modernism is pleased to present a solo exhibition of recent works by Peter SARKISIAN, a Santa Fe-based new-media artist.

Sarkisian studied photography and film at the California Institute of the Arts and the American Film Institute in the late 1980's, and then began working with video as a sculptural element in the mid 90's. The underlying premise of his work remains committed to using video as an instrument against commercialized media, namely television, in order to transform the act of watching video from an experience-killing endeavor to an experience-creating one. He accomplishes this by joining sculptural elements with projected video imagery to create audio/visual illusions that trap the viewer between conflicting interpretations, thereby forcing a state of self-awareness that is otherwise absent while watching television.

Each *VideoMorphic Figure* consists of a 3-D printed robot figure upon which Sarkisian projects a video. The works begin dark, and then slowly come to life, starting with a small round windowed compartment in the robot's torso, through which we see a man trapped inside, being spun around like a washing machine. We hear him calling out for help while frantically banging on the glass. Next, the robotic form flickers to life bit by bit, colors flashing, gears whirring, and energy pulsing, accompanied by a soundtrack of buzzing, crackling interference and jet engines winding up. Some of the figures include video of the head of a mysterious bald man in place of the robotic head, calmly blinking and looking off at something to the side. After several minutes the robots begin to flicker out, leaving our human to spin endlessly in his capsule, begging for our help, leaving the viewer to ponder the impact technological advancements in our world today.

All of Sarkisian's work is grounded in the idea that video, in its ubiquitous and most popular form, is an experientially void medium, and that by depriving ourselves of experience in favor of information-based images, we have become unable to grasp the meaning of consequence or to coexist with mutual understanding. His installations therefore attempt to steer the world's most influential medium back on a collision course with the viewer in order to reintroduce an element of experience to the viewing process. If the filmmaker's traditional goal is to distract viewers through the suspension of self-awareness, then Sarkisian's goal is to create a sense of heightened self-awareness by engaging the viewer in constructed environments that blur the line between what is real and what is mediated.

Named a Master Video Artist in 2007 by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Sarkisian has exhibited

724 ELLIS STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94109 • (415) 541-0461 • FAX 541-0425
WWW.MODERNISMINC.COM



VideoMorphic Figure (Robot 6), 2013
sintered 3D print, powder coated steel and aluminum,
video projection, audio

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widely throughout the world in major museums and public venues, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Musée Picasso, France, the Hammer Museum of Art, the Albright-knox Art Gallery and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Sarkisian's work has been featured in many international exhibitions and festivals, including the Istanbul Biennial in Turkey, the Vidarte Festival in Mexico City, the Whitney Biennial in New York, and the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland.

In 2008 the University of Wyoming Art Museum organized an extensive mid-career retrospective of Sarkisian's work. The exhibition traveled to numerous venues throughout the world, including the Knoxville Museum of Art, the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts and the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art.

In April of 2014, The Orange County Museum of Art opened it's own retrospective exhibition of Sarkisian's work, curated by Dan Cameron.

The public is invited to attend an opening reception on **Wednesday**, July 10, from 5:30 to 8pm.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: 415/541-0461 / FAX: 415/541-0425 OR EMAIL: info@modernisminc.com
HI-RES IMAGES UPON REQUEST.



VideoMorphic Figure (Robot 6), 2013, sintered 3D print, powder coated steel and aluminum, video projection, audio, 14 x 14 x 40 inches